

What is claimed:

1. An isolated nucleic acid molecule selected from the group consisting of:
  - 5 (a) a nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1;
  - (b) a nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:3;
  - (c) a nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence set forth in  
10 SEQ ID NO:4;
  - (d) a nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:6;
  - (e) a nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:7; and
  - 15 (f) a nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:9.
2. An isolated nucleic acid molecule which encodes a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:
  - 20 (a) a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2;
  - (b) a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 5; and
  - (c) a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID  
25 NO: 8.
- ~~3. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence contained in the plasmid deposited with ATCC® as Accession Number \_\_\_\_\_.~~
- 30 4. An isolated nucleic acid molecule which encodes a naturally occurring allelic variant of a polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:
  - (a) a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2;
  - (b) a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID  
35 NO: 5; and
  - (c) a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 8.

5. An isolated nucleic acid molecule selected from the group consisting of:
- a) a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence which is at least 59% homologous to the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, or 9, or a complement thereof;
  - b) a nucleic acid molecule comprising a fragment of at least 461 nucleotides of a nucleic acid comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, or 9, or a complement thereof;
  - c) a nucleic acid molecule which encodes a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence at least about 60% homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, 5, or 8; and
  - d) a nucleic acid molecule which encodes a fragment of a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, 5, or 8, wherein the fragment comprises at least 15 contiguous amino acid residues of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, 5, or 8.
6. An isolated nucleic acid molecule which hybridizes to the nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 under stringent conditions.
7. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence which is complementary to the nucleotide sequence of the nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.
8. An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, and a nucleotide sequence encoding a heterologous polypeptide.
9. A vector comprising the nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.
10. The vector of claim 9, which is an expression vector.
11. A host cell transfected with the expression vector of claim 10.
12. A method of producing a polypeptide comprising culturing the host cell of claim 11 in an appropriate culture medium to, thereby, produce the polypeptide.
13. An isolated polypeptide selected from the group consisting of:

a) a fragment of a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, 5, or 8, wherein the fragment comprises at least 15 contiguous amino acids of SEQ ID NO:2, 5, or 8;

5 b) a naturally occurring allelic variant of a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, 5, or 8, wherein the polypeptide is encoded by a nucleic acid molecule which hybridizes to a nucleic acid molecule consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, or 9 under stringent conditions;

10 c) a polypeptide which is encoded by a nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence which is at least 59 % homologous to a nucleic acid comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, or 9;

d) a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence which is at least 60% homologous to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, 5, or 8.

15 14. The isolated polypeptide of claim 13 comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, 5, or 8.

20 15. The polypeptide of claim 13, further comprising heterologous amino acid sequences.

16. An antibody which selectively binds to a polypeptide of claim 13.

17. A method for detecting the presence of a polypeptide of claim 13 in a sample comprising:

25 a) contacting the sample with a compound which selectively binds to the polypeptide; and

b) determining whether the compound binds to the polypeptide in the sample to thereby detect the presence of a polypeptide of claim 13 in the sample.

30 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the compound which binds to the polypeptide is an antibody.

19. A kit comprising a compound which selectively binds to a polypeptide of claim 13 and instructions for use.

35 20. A method for detecting the presence of a nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 in a sample comprising:

- a) contacting the sample with a nucleic acid probe or primer which selectively hybridizes to the nucleic acid molecule; and
  - b) determining whether the nucleic acid probe or primer binds to a nucleic acid molecule in the sample to thereby detect the presence of a nucleic acid molecule
- 5 of any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 in the sample.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the sample comprises mRNA molecules and is contacted with a nucleic acid probe.

- 10 22. A kit comprising a compound which selectively hybridizes to a nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 and instructions for use.

23. A method for identifying a compound which binds to a polypeptide of claim 13 comprising:

- 15 a) contacting the polypeptide, or a cell expressing the polypeptide with a test compound; and
- b) determining whether the polypeptide binds to the test compound.

20 24. The method of claim 23, wherein the binding of the test compound to the polypeptide is detected by a method selected from the group consisting of:

- a) detection of binding by direct detection of test compound/polypeptide binding;
- b) detection of binding using a competition binding assay; and
- 25 c) detection of binding using an assay for NIP2b, NIP2cL, or NIP2cS activity.

25. A method for modulating the activity of a polypeptide of claim 13 comprising contacting the polypeptide or a cell expressing the polypeptide with a compound which binds to the polypeptide in a sufficient concentration to modulate the activity of the

30 polypeptide.

26. A method for identifying a compound which modulates the activity of a polypeptide of claim 13 comprising:

- 35 a) contacting a polypeptide of claim 13 with a test compound; and
- b) determining the effect of the test compound on the activity of the polypeptide to thereby identify a compound which modulates the activity of the polypeptide.
- add  
B4